

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2518

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 4348

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJ: PERON' S RANK RETURNED BY PRESIDENTIAL DECREE

1. SUMMARY: PERON' S RANK HAS BEEN RETURNED BY PRESIDENTIAL DECREE AFTER DECISION TO TAKE MATTER OUT OF HANDS OF CONGRESS TO ENSURE UNANIMITY. END SUMMARY

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 86 OF THE CONSTITUTION, THE PRESIDENT IS EMPOWERED TO DESIGNATE MILITARY RANK. BEFORE DEPARTURE FOR MADRID ON MAY 14, PRESIDENT CAMPORA TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ARTICLE 86 TO DECREE RETURN OF PERON' S RANK OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL.

3. THIS WAS DONE, HOWEVER, ONLY AFTER AN UNFORTUNATE GAFFE IN THE CONGRESS. SEVERAL YOUNG PERONIST DEPUTIES LED BY RODOLFO ARCE HAD PROPOSED A BILL IN THE LOWER CHAMBER TO RESTORE PERON' S RANK. THE BILL DOUBTLESS COULD HAVE BEEN PASSED IN VIEW OF THE LARGE JUSTICIALISTA MAJORITY IN THE LOWER HOUSE. HOWEVER, A FEW OPPOSITION DEPUTIES WOULD HAVE OPPOSED IT, AND EVEN SOME UCR DEPUTIES

WHO

WERE NOT OPPOSED TO RETURNING RANK AND HONORS TO HIM WERE TAKING THE POSITION THAT THIS WAS A MATTER AMPLY COVERED BY THE AMNESTY LAW AND THEREFORE THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR AN ACT ON THE PART
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OF CONGRESS.

4. IN SUM, THE MEASURE ACTUALLY BEEN BROUGHT TO DEBATE, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN DISSENTING VOICES; AND ANYTHING LESS THAN UNANIMITY WOULD HAVE BEEN EMBARRASSING TO PERON. THE PERONIST PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER, RAUL LASTIRI, MADE EVERY EFFORT TO DISSUADE HIS YOUNG COLLEAGUES FROM PROPOSING THE MEASURE, BUT IT WAS ONLY WITH THE INTERVENTION OF PERONIST SECRETARY GENERAL JUAN ABAL MEDINA AND LABOR LEADER LORENZO MIGUEL, WHO CLAIMED TO BE ACTING UNDER TELEX INSTRUCTIONS FROM PERON, THAT THE PERONIST DEPUTIES AGREED TO DROP THEIR PROPOSAL, THEREBY OPENING THE WAY FOR PERON' S RANK TO BE RETURNED BY PRESIDENTIAL DECREE.

5. COMMENT: THAT PERON' S RANK WOULD BE RETURNED BY ONE MEANS OR ANOTHER WAS A FORGONE CONCLUSION. WHAT IS INTERESTING IN THIS CASE, THEREFORE, IS THE DIFFICULTY LASTIRI HAD IN CONTROLLING HIS YOUTHFUL COLLEAGUES IN THE CHAMBER. REPORTEDLY, ALL PERONIST DEPUTIES HAVE BEEN REQUIRED SYMBOLICALLY TO TENDER THEIR RESIGNATIONS IN ADVANCE- THUS GIVING LASTIRI (AND THE MOVEMENT) STRONG ADVANTAGE IN CONTROLLING THEM;. I. E. EITHER THEY ACCEPT PARTY DISCIPLINE OR HAVE THEIR RESIGNATIONS ACCEPTED. DESPITE THIS, YOUTHFUL EXCESSES AND INEXPERIENCE APPARENTLY WILL NOT BE EASY TO CURB.

LODGE

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NNNNMAFVVZCZ

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